

United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- + Special Commission investigating 8 January killing of Deputy Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, concludes that "assassination was work of a single assailant acting unilaterally".
- + Croatian offensive has not affected in any major way peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to Co-Chairmen to Yugoslav conference; talks, resumed today, to continue tomorrow; Security Council to continue consultations on the subject tonight.
- + Secretary-General expresses deep concern over security of United Nations personnel in the Sudan; stresses that delivery of humanitarian relief to that country is contingent upon authorities' cooperation to ensure workers' security.
- + Macedonia's application for United Nations membership, initially submitted last July, is circulated as official document by Secretary-General; joint Nordic infantry battalion expected to be deployed in that country by mid-February.
- + Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend mandate of United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon for further period of six months.
- + Goal of Natural Disaster Reduction Decade is to establish effective partnership between United Nations and international community, Secretary-General tells opening of second session of Special High-Level Council of that Decade.
- + Two more flights arrive in Iraq, bringing to four number of flights completed by United Nations Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament since last week, according to United Nations spokesman.
- + Samir Sanbar appointed Special Representative for United Nations Mission to Verify Referendum in Eritrea.

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- + Government of Guatemala proposes two-part plan for national reconciliation aimed at ending thirty years of armed conflict in that country.
- + Russian Federation and United States express concern over "continuing sanguinary tragedy" in Nagorno-Karabakh; call for early convening of Minsk Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to solve conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- + Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, currently in Cambodia; to attend Supreme National Council meeting in Beijing on 28 January.
- + Despite recent killing of international relief worker and bombings of relief trucks, World Food Programme continues winter relief programme for northern Iraq and steps up deliveries to southern and central Iraq.

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The report of the Special Commission investigating the 8 January killing of Hakiya Turajlic, Deputy Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has concluded that "the assassination was the work of a single assailant acting unilaterally".

In a letter transmitting the report to the President of the Security Council, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali points out that it is not part of the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) "to escort members of the Presidency of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to and from Sarajevo airport". However, he says, UNPROFOR has provided the service as a courtesy to the host Government.

In addition, the letter notes, the request for escort made by the Bosnian Presidency on 8 January was on "very short" notice, and not until the time of the incident itself was UNPROFOR aware of the identity of the personality being transported. As a result, UNPROFOR failed to adhere to the standing operating procedures normally applied to the escort of civilian VIPs.

The report makes specific recommendations relating to various aspects of UNPROFOR's functioning in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the proposal to create a zone around Sarajevo airport, as already planned under the agreement of 5 June 1992, and a review of the procedures for the control of activities at the airport. The report also suggests that the right of UNPROFOR to enjoy freedom of movement be emphasized and that the knowledge and training of the United Nations personnel with regard to standing operating procedures be increased.

Document S/25130.

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According to Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, the Croatian offensive had not affected in

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any major way the peace talks on Bosnia and Herzegovina, currently under way in Geneva, and the talks - resumed today - should continue tomorrow.

The announcement was made at a press conference in Geneva yesterday, 24 January, at which the two Co-Chairmen deplored the Croatian army offensive that took place in the "pink zones" -- Serbian-populated areas in Croatia under United Nations protection - and urged all sides to "contain the conflict."

Mr. Vance and Lord Owen said that despite the outbreak of fighting in those areas, the Geneva peace talks, aimed at ending the nine-month conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were making progress -- "slow, but definite."

The Security Council was scheduled to continue consultations on the situation in the area tonight.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a statement issued today by his Spokesman, has expressed deep concern about the security of United Nations and other humanitarian relief personnel working in the Sudan.

The seriousness of the situation, the statement said, had been highlighted by two recent incidents; one in August, where two United Nations staff members, and a non-governmental relief worker and a free-lance journalist were killed in southern Sudan. A United Nations investigation mission concluded that the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) members were responsible for the killings.

In a separate incident, two United Nations staff members were detained by authorities of the Government of the Sudan in Juba. The United Nations has now been notified of the results of the investigation, but informed that the whereabouts of the two individuals are unknown.

The statement also pointed out that, while the United Nations remained committed to providing humanitarian relief to all those in need throughout the Sudan, its ability to do so was dependent upon the full cooperation of all authorities, in particular in insuring the security of relief workers.

For its part, the statement said, the Organization had undertaken a thorough review of operational and security procedures so as to insure maximum protection of United Nations and other humanitarian relief workers, but ultimate responsibility rested with those exercising authority in areas of humanitarian relief operations.

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The application for membership in the United Nations by the Republic of Macedonia - first submitted to the United Nations last July - has been circulated as an official document by the Secretary-General, following Security Council consultations concerning its receivability.

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Press Release DH/1316
25 January 1993

In a letter of 30 July 1992 to the Secretary-General, which contained the application for United Nations membership, Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov wrote that his country's admission to United Nations membership would be "a very significant step towards the peaceful solution of the crisis in the territory of the former Yugoslavia".

The Republic of Macedonia had accepted the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations and fully supported the United Nations and the enhancement of its role in promoting international peace, security and justice, the letter also said.

Meanwhile, according to a United Nations spokesman today, a 735-member joint Nordic battalion should be deployed in Macedonia in mid-February. The mandate of the Nordic battalion, involving Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, was "to monitor and report any developments in border areas which could undermine confidence and stability in Macedonia or threaten its territory." Administratively, the Nordic contingent would be part of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the spokesman added.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended to the Security Council that it extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for a further period of six months, until 31 July 1993.

In a report to the Council, dated 22 January, the Secretary-General said that during the last six months southern Lebanon had witnessed periods of high tension and UNIFIL was doing its best to prevent the area from being used for hostile activities. He appealed to all parties concerned to respect UNIFIL's international and impartial status and to show proper regard for the lives of non-combatant men, women and children.

Regarding the serious shortfall in the funding of the Force, the report said that, at present, unpaid assessments amounted to some \$228 million. The sum represented money owed to Member States which contributed troops to the Force.

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The goal of the Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was to establish an effective partnership between the United Nations and the international community, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the opening of the second session of the Special High-Level Council of the International Decade this morning.

Natural disasters were becoming more destructive and more costly, he noted. In 1991 alone, the economic cost of disasters was estimated at some \$44 billion, with more than 160,000 people losing their lives.

However, the Secretary-General continued, in the field of natural disaster reduction, only limited progress had been achieved so far. The

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United Nations should play a strong new lead by mobilizing scientific knowledge and technological know-how. Just as preventive diplomacy could foresee and prevent the outbreak of war, so the effects of natural disasters could be foreseen and contained, he said.

Over 100 countries had already drawn up national plans for disaster reductions, following the guidelines and recommendations of the Scientific and Technical Committee of the Decade. Donor countries had also begun to respond by providing practical support for such national plans, the Secretary-General said. The holding of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, scheduled to take place in May 1994 in Yokohama, Japan, should be a most important step in the world-wide efforts to address these problems, he said.

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Since last Friday, two more flights had arrived in Iraq, bringing to four the total number of flights that had been completed by the United Nations Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament (UNSCOM) since the resumption of such flights last week, according to a United Nations spokesman today.

On Saturday, a cargo flight had arrived as expected and early today, a fourth flight carrying personnel of a new International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection unit, as well as a missile inspection unit, arrived in Iraq. Everything continued to go smoothly, the spokesman added.

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The Secretary-General has announced the appointment of Samir Sanbar, Director of Information Centers Division of the Department of Public Information (DPI), as his Special Representative for the United Nations Mission to Verify the Referendum in Eritrea (UNOVER). The appointment is at the Assistant Secretary-General level.

The referendum process in Eritrea, begun in July 1992, will be completed in April this year, and consists of three phases, namely, the registration of voters, the referendum campaign and the poll.

The mandate of UNOVER is to verify the impartiality of the referendum authorities and organs; complete freedom of organization, movement, assembly and expression; and equal access to media facilities and the proper drawing up of the roles. The mission will also report to the referendum authorities on complaints, irregularities and interferences, and observe all activities related to the referendum, including registration of voters, organization of the poll, the campaign, the counting, computation and announcement of results.

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The Government of Guatemala has put forward a proposal on a two-part plan for national reconciliation aimed at ending more than thirty years of armed conflict in that country. The proposal is in line with the understanding reached with the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca -- the Government

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opposition group known as URNG -- under the Esquipulas II Agreements of 1987 and the Oslo Agreement of March 1990.

According to the proposal, which was conveyed to the Secretary-General by President Jorge Antonio Serrano Elías of Guatemala last week, the Agreement on Human Rights should be signed immediately, followed by the signature, within a period of no more than 90 days after that, of the Total Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace. In the unlikely event that the Total Agreement cannot be signed, a definitive cease-fire should be declared upon the expiry of the 90-day period.

Also according to the proposal, the Government shall determine the places where, under United Nations supervision, URNG should temporarily concentrate all its armed contingents until the negotiations are completed for the demobilization and disarmament of URNG.

A letter containing the proposal, signed by the Guatemalan Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Julio Armando Martini Herrera, was made public on 19 January. (S/25134).

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The Russian Federation and the United States have expressed "deep concern over the continuing sanguinary tragedy" in Nagorno-Karabakh and have called for an immediate end to the bloodshed and an early convening of the Minsk Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to solve all the disputed problems between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

According to a joint statement, dated 3 January, signed by Russian President Boris Yeltsin and George Bush, then United States President, the hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan continued to increase the number of casualties, mostly among civilians, and inflicted enormous damage to the economies of both States. The two countries called on the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan "to confirm by practical deeds" their statements on the desire to solve the conflict by peaceful means.

In a statement in reply, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrossian said that his country had repeatedly given tangible proof of its commitment to achieve understanding on the basis of proposals mutually acceptable to the Armenian and Azerbaijani people.

In a similar statement, the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, G. Petrossian, said the efforts of mediators were not bearing fruit because Azerbaijan was taking a position that was "clearly and totally destructive".

However, according to a statement by the President of Azerbaijan, Abulfaz Elchibey, the conflict was a question of aggression, and unless the aggressor was identified, it would be difficult to put an end to the bloody war.

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The joint United States/Russian statement was transmitted in a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 23 January, and signed by the two countries' Permanent Representatives to the United Nations, Edward J. Perkins and Yuli M. Vorontsov. (S/25148).

The three other statements were transmitted in letters addressed to the President of the Security Council, and signed by the Permanent Representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan, respectively. (S/25142, S/25141, S/25143).

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The Spokesman for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) announced today that Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding, who is currently in Cambodia to review the work of UNTAC and its various components, would travel to Battambang, Sok San and Takeo tomorrow to visit the various UNTAC teams. He is scheduled to go afterwards to Beijing to attend the Supreme National Council (SNC) meeting to take place on 28 January in the Chinese capital.

In a separate development, it was announced today that a civilian police monitor from the Philippines serving with UNTAC had died of a gunshot wound to the head in Cambodia on Saturday in "an apparent suicide". Sergeant Winston Zerrudo is the 24th person to have died while in the service of UNTAC, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that its winter relief programme for northern Iraq continues and food deliveries were well ahead of schedule despite the recent killing of an international relief worker and bombings of relief trucks.

According to a press release issued by the Agency today, the WFP is committed to feeding 1.2 million Iraqi people throughout the country during the winter months. Its programme for Iraq, part of the United Nations Action Plan, has not been affected by the recent military actions in the Baghdad area and in the south of the country.

The WFP convoys were recently suspended for two days after a CARE-Australia international staff member was killed near Suleimaniyah. During November and December 1992, a total of 14 United Nations relief trucks were blown up, and unexploded time bombs were found on another 10 trucks from, or delivering relief food to, the Kurdish population in northern Iraq.

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